

Send to: GROSS, JENNIFER
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA-LAS VEGAS
4505 S MARYLAND PKWY BOX 451003
LAS VEGAS, NV 89154-1003

Time of Request: Friday, October 01, 2010 18:40:38 EST
Client ID/Project Name:
Number of Lines: 482
Job Number: 2841:245006239

Research Information

Service: Terms and Connectors Search
Print Request: Selected Document(s): 40,41,43,44,64,74,75,77
Source: Las Vegas Review-Journal
Search Terms: "coroner's inquest" and date(geq (01/01/2007) and leq
(12/30/2008))



40 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

November 25, 2007 Sunday

SECTION: D; Pg. 1D

LENGTH: 900 words

HEADLINE: Downtown's most predictable dog-and-pony show

BYLINE: Erin Neff

BODY:

Reporters cringe when they're assigned to cover a coroner's inquest.

Not only is the outcome of each proceeding known before anyone shows up at the courthouse, journalists spend all day in a courtroom with family members of those killed by police. These grieving survivors relive the trauma with no ability to express their emotions or question the process.

The system is so one-sided it could just as well be served by the cops' internal Use of Force Board.

But when decent people representing law enforcement, victims' rights and minority groups met to forge change in the system, I had hope some reform could emerge.

Instead, the public once again was treated to a lengthy process that ultimately was pre-determined.

Nothing the Clark County Commission enacted Tuesday will have a meaningful impact on the flawed inquest process.

With the exception of Commissioners Chris Giunchigliani and Lawrence Weekly, who supported an alternative ordinance that failed, the commission backed new rules that still bar lawyers from questioning witnesses.

The inquisition, what a show.

Currently, if your loved one was shot in the back while handcuffed or shot while holding a threatening basketball, you cannot ask the coroner's representative why he is testifying that the officer's shooting was justified when he should simply be discussing cause of death.

Criminal defense attorney E. Brent Bryson, who represents families of those killed by police, discussed just how stacked the current system is.

In one case, he felt the coroner's representative was, in fact, providing leading testimony that would help the jury get to one of its three possible findings: justified, excusable or criminal.

Bryson had to write his question and hand it to a hearing master. He essentially asked whether the coroner's representative was guiding his testimony to achieve one of those outcomes.

The hearing master asked the question like this: "Do you know what your role here is today?"

Downtown's most predictable dog-and-pony show Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) November 25, 2007 Sunday

Since 1976, when the system began, the police have been found justified in the deaths they caused in all but one case. Clearly, as Las Vegas Police Protective Association Director Chris Collins told the commission, the overwhelming majority of officer-involved shootings are not done "indiscriminately."

Maybe an officer didn't go to work that morning intending to kill a particular suspect, but it doesn't mean pent up frustration (and in some cases, racism) can't, in fact, lead to a culture of "shoot first and ask questions later."

And in my mind, a case like that - while rare - still is not the kind of behavior the public should justify.

The current system not only further erodes public trust, but downright fails to protect and serve the community.

Commissioner Tom Collins, who voted with the majority for the "new" rule, suggested at one point that the system works because the jury is clueless and defense attorneys can always proceed with a civil case after the inquest.

Commissioner Bruce Woodbury said he was supporting the "reform" because now any written questions submitted during an inquest will actually be read into the record - not asked to the jury mind you, but read after the fact. Woodbury called this the check and balance because the majority of hearing masters are elected justices of the peace.

"If the hearing master isn't asking the right questions, he's ultimately accountable," Woodbury said.

Under the existing rules, the family of the person killed by police simply tells the press afterward what they had hoped to learn.

The reporter, having spent upward of six hours listening to the testimony, now has a few minutes to slap down the story that essentially says the officer's shooting was determined to be justified.

Attorney Robert Langford, who has also represented families of people killed by police, suggested the commission ought to get rid of the inquest "if all we care about is making sure there's a headline in tomorrow's paper that says the officer was cleared."

A meaningful system would actually protect the officer, not lead to chaos, as District Attorney David Roger previously suggested.

Imagine a system where the testimony was not entirely guided by the prosecutor, who handles all questioning of witnesses. Imagine the family being able to ask about any discrepancy in fact or why a person reporting on an autopsy is capable of knowing why the officer pulled the trigger.

When the reform group fell to pieces, in part because the attorney general's office walked away from the process, Giunchigliani pressed county staff to offer an alternative to simply rubber-stamping the existing practice. The so-called "ACLU" ordinance would have permitted a family representative to question witnesses. Only Giunchigliani and Weekly supported it. They then opposed the milquetoast version, which the ACLU's Gary Peck said "does nothing."

When he voiced support for the sheriff's ordinance, Woodbury acknowledged that the commission can always revisit the inquest process if this reform doesn't work.

There will undoubtedly be another Swauve Lopez and another cop ruled justified for shooting a handcuffed kid in the back.

There will be more civil lawsuit settlements and more public distrust of a system that engenders none.

There will be more seven-hour, dog-and-pony shows where the family of someone shot by the cops just wants an answer.

Contact Erin Neff at (702) 387-2906, or by e-mail at eneff@reviewjournal.com

LOAD-DATE: November 27, 2007



41 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

November 21, 2007 Wednesday

SECTION: B; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 668 words

HEADLINE: ACLU chief slams rules

BYLINE: Lisa Kim Bach

BODY:

REVIEW-JOURNAL

Two changes in conducting coroner's inquest hearings for fatal officer-involved shootings are as good as nothing at all, said Gary Peck, executive director of the Nevada American Civil Liberties Union.

On Tuesday, Clark County commissioners amended the inquest procedure to require that all hearings now be conducted by a justice of the peace instead of a hearing officer. Commissioners also voted to allow questions from the family of the deceased to be read into the inquest record, outside the presence of the jury.

But what commissioners rejected was the heart of reforming the controversial inquest process, Peck said. Although commissioners Chris Giunchigliani and Lawrence Weekly supported it, a proposal to allow attorneys for family members of those killed to question witnesses in front of jurors was rejected by the majority of the commissioners.

Under the existing ordinance, family members have to submit questions in writing to the inquest's presiding official, who can then reword or refuse to ask the question of a witness.

"The core reform that needs to take place is allowing questions by representatives of the families," Peck said. "What they did today was completely meaningless. I think it feeds the impression, whether fairly or unfairly, that the whole system is rigged."

Commissioner Bruce Woodbury said during the meeting that he respectfully disagreed with Peck. The changes are meaningful, Woodbury said, and are appropriate steps to maintaining integrity in the process.

"We're never going to satisfy everyone with a point of view," Woodbury said.

Clark County Sheriff Doug Gillespie spoke in favor of the changes made by commissioners and restated his continued support for having questions from involved families submitted in writing to the person presiding over the inquest.

Chris Collins, executive director of the Las Vegas Police Protective Association, supported what commissioners approved and emphasized that no police officer makes the decision to use a weapon lightly.

"Officers in this community do not kill indiscriminately," Collins said.

Peck wasn't the only one frustrated by what didn't change in the inquest process. Attorneys E. Brent Bryson and Robert Langford, who've both represented families of individuals killed by police, said that it's critical for family mem-

bers to have a voice during the inquest. That role should not belong exclusively to prosecutors from the district attorney's office, who often work closely with the officers in other cases.

"We should be allowed as a family representative to ask questions," Bryson said. "Not because it's cross-examination, but just to ferret out all the facts and discrepancies between testimony. Isn't that really completeness?"

Langford told commissioners that if they weren't going to truly reform the process, it would be better to do away with inquests entirely. The responsibility for deciding whether to press criminal charges against the officer in a shooting fatality would then rest entirely with the district attorney and save the county the cost of the hearing.

"It's cheaper to get rid of the whole thing if all we care about is making sure there's a headline in tomorrow's paper that says the officer was cleared," Langford said.

Inquest procedures came under fire last year when a jury ruled that Metropolitan Police Department officers were justified when they shot 17-year-old murder suspect Swauve Lopez in the back as he tried to escape from custody while in handcuffs.

The county responded by assembling representatives from community groups such as the ACLU and the Las Vegas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to work with county staff for about a year and half to reform the rules on how inquests are conducted.

"The county brought the group together," Peck said. "And at the end of the day, the community groups were ignored and the commission accepted what the cops wanted."

Contact reporter Lisa Kim Bach at lbach@reviewjournal.com or (702) 383-0287.

LOAD-DATE: November 22, 2007



43 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

October 7, 2007 Sunday

SECTION: D; Pg. 2D

LENGTH: 896 words

HEADLINE: A broken system

BODY:

When someone dies at the hands of a Las Vegas police officer, the appropriateness of that death is reviewed in a coroner's inquest at the county courthouse.

The involved officers testify, in uniform, being guided through their account by a local prosecutor.

The prosecutors work closely with police on a daily basis. It's not far-fetched to call their treatment of the officers sympathetic. Nor is the coroner's inquest an "adversarial" proceeding. Other attorneys - representing the decedent's family or other interested parties - are not allowed to subject the officers to skeptical cross-examination, challenging assertions or asking for an explanation of discrepancies.

Family members may submit written questions through their gagged attorneys for consideration by the hearing officer. But many of those questions are discarded without ever being asked aloud. Hearing officers are not required to explain why such questions are ignored.

"This system invites lawsuits because families leave (the hearing) saying it was a sham," asserts Gary Peck, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada.

That's true. And it's alarming how often those lawsuits result in large, tax-funded cash settlements.

Take the case of 32-year-old John Perrin, a pedestrian armed only with a basketball, who was shot six times (out of 14 rounds discharged) by Metro officer Bruce Gentner as he walked down a sidewalk in southwest Las Vegas in April 1999. John Perrin was not wanted for, fleeing from or previously suspected of any known crime. There were no eyewitnesses, though witnesses within earshot testified they heard no spoken warning from Gentner till after the shots were fired.

In allowing a civil suit to proceed in the death after Gentner was cleared in the coroner's inquest, U.S. District Judge Roger Hunt wrote, "From the statements of those who worked with and came in contact with officer Gentner, it appears that officer Gentner has a tendency not only to use excessive force, but to misperceive potential safety threats. If officer Gentner's own fellow officers were afraid to work with him, surely Metro was on constructive notice that Gentner was not only a potential threat to public safety, but that he regularly flaunted constitutional safeguards intended to protect citizens against the use of excessive force."

As usual, Clark County taxpayers ended up paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to the estate of Mr. Perrin's surviving daughter, in a shooting where the coroner's inquest had ruled everything was just hunky-dory.

"The way the system is now, the cop always walks," said Mark LePage, foreman of the coroner's jury that exonerated Gentner, as they later said they believed they had to do under the hearing officer's instructions. "I think you need to

change the law" - so officers cannot shoot suspects until certain the individual poses a threat to their or an innocent party's safety - "because it is wrong."

Then there was the 1996 case of Officer George Pease, who killed homeless man Henry Rowe in the dark of a moonless night at the hobo's makeshift shelter in a warehouse district not far from the Strip. Pease contended he had to cut Mr. Rowe's throat and then shoot him in the head after Mr. Rowe seized the officer's gun and fired four shots ... all of which missed.

After saying chemical tests on both men's clothing would confirm or refute officer Pease's story, Metro announced at the coroner's inquest they'd decided not to perform those tests, citing "cost concerns."

That doesn't even pass the smell test.

The Clark County Commission is now considering a set of proposed reforms to the inquest process, which Mr. Peck dismisses as "nothing but window dressing."

Commissioners agreed Tuesday that elected justices of the peace should replace the current, unelected "hearing officers" who are not judges.

Representatives of the state attorney general's office will also be asked to step in and replace local prosecutors in presenting the government case.

Mr. Peck suggested that hearing officers read family members' written questions aloud to the jury, including those they intend to discard. But commissioners sided with Sheriff Doug Gillespie, who favored such rejected questions being read to the public outside the jury's hearing.

In the end, Mr. Peck called for a much more substantial revamping of the process. But Commission Chairman Rory Reid replied that to make the proceedings any more adversarial would invite police officers to "take the Fifth" and refuse to offer testimony, which is now voluntary.

Clark County's inquest system is superior to that which still prevails in many jurisdictions, where police simply announce whether an officer has been exonerated, with no public sifting of the evidence at all.

But Mr. Peck is also correct, that the present system is deeply flawed.

To pretend that the current inquest system thoroughly probed the deaths of Henry Rowe, John Perrin, Orlando Barlow, and 17-year-old Swauve Lopez - that all questions were satisfactorily resolved - would be absurd.

The justice system should truly presume innocence. It should not evoke fear of job loss or imprisonment in anyone who shoots justifiably in defense of himself or other innocent parties, whether the shooter be a police officer or not.

But public support and confidence demand something more probing than a scripted dog-and-pony show.

LOAD-DATE: October 9, 2007



44 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

October 3, 2007 Wednesday

SECTION: B; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 775 words

HEADLINE: Inquest ordinance draws fire

BYLINE: Adrienne Packer

BODY:

REVIEW-JOURNAL

A Clark County ordinance designed to instill public trust in coroner's inquest hearings was attacked Tuesday by critics who argue that proposed changes will do nothing to convince families of those killed that the hearings do not favor law enforcement.

"It is a badly broken system, and this is nothing but window dressing," said Gary Peck, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada. "They haven't done anything to change the rules by which the game is played."

The "game" is a coroner's inquest, a proceeding held to determine whether officer-involved fatal shootings are justified.

The process has been controversial and came under fire again after an inquest jury ruled last year that Metropolitan Police Department officers were justified when they shot 17-year-old murder suspect Swauve Lopez in the back as he fled police in handcuffs.

On Tuesday, commissioners agreed that justices of the peace - elected officials whom the public can hold accountable - should replace hearing officers who preside over inquests.

The commissioners said "interested parties," individuals who are allowed to ask questions of witnesses, should be broadened beyond immediate family members to include grandparents or other relatives with whom the deceased might have lived.

To avoid a chaotic situation, questions must be submitted by an attorney representing the party, all agreed at Tuesday's commission meeting.

To appease critics who think the district attorney's office has a too-close relationship with law enforcement and is therefore unable to fairly conduct a fact-finding hearing, the commission requested that the attorney general's office step in and present the case.

The most debated element of the proposed ordinance concerned who can pose questions at hearings and how the hearing officer should handle inappropriate or irrelevant queries.

Peck said that questions from family members of the deceased are often tossed aside without explanation. He said the two officers involved in the Lopez hearing offered different answers when asked how far they were from Lopez when he was shot. No one questioned the discrepancy.

"Any system that doesn't include that question when you're trying to get to criminal intent is a bogus system," Peck said.

Peck suggested the hearing officer read questions posed by family members aloud in front of the jury. If the hearing officer thinks the question is irrelevant, the jury can be told why and the question could be discarded.

But commissioners sided with Sheriff Doug Gillespie, who agreed the public should hear the questions outside the presence of the jury. If they were deemed irrelevant, they would be read into the record, but jurors would not hear the question upon their return.

"Those watching it (on television) will see it; those reporting on it will hear it," Gillespie said.

Under the existing rules, in cases of questions deemed irrelevant, the hearing officer does not read the question out loud or explain why it was not posed to a witness.

Commission Chairman Rory Reid feared that if inappropriate questions were asked in front of the jury, officers on the witness stand might invoke their Fifth Amendment right and refuse to testify. Officer testimony, which is voluntary, is crucial to resolving a case, he said.

Peck lobbied to have the entire process revamped and said it blatantly favors law enforcement.

A hearing officer once allowed a use-of-force expert to testify about the cause of death of an inmate who was choked, he said. The officer told the jury the inmate died from "sudden inmate death syndrome," Peck said, adding that the hearing officer never questioned the qualifications of the witness.

Another hearing officer allowed a woman to sit on the jury even after she disclosed that she was an acquaintance of then-Sheriff Bill Young, Peck said.

"This system invites lawsuits because families leave (the hearing) saying it was a sham," Peck said.

Peck and Dean Ishman, president of the Las Vegas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, supported the commission's decision to request that the attorney general's office replace the district attorney's office in conducting the hearings. Ishman said some proceedings turn into "character assassinations" because the prosecutor is familiar with the criminal background of the deceased.

District Attorney David Roger denied that his office is one-sided. He said officers are often cleared of wrongdoing because jurors understand life-threatening situations that frequently face police.

"In my 21 years, I haven't met an officer who would like to shoot a human being," Roger said.

LOAD-DATE: October 4, 2007



64 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

April 1, 2007 Sunday

SECTION: D; Pg. 4D

LENGTH: 443 words

HEADLINE: Inquest system is deeply flawed

BODY:

To the editor:

Late last month, my son John Collopy and I had the unhappy duty of attending the coroner's inquest into the fatal shooting of my son and his brother, David Collopy, by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officer James Coates on Feb. 9 in a remote wilderness area.

I had been told by others who had experience with coroner's inquests that it would be biased in favor of the officer and would almost certainly result in a ruling of justifiable or excusable homicide. I had also read many news articles discussing the issue.

As the proceeding progressed, it became abundantly clear to me, my son and the other relatives and friends who attended that the inquest was designed to convince the jury that the homicide of my son was justified. The only person present at the shooting who was alive to testify was a well-rehearsed officer Coates. The chief deputy district attorney and deputy district attorney were the only persons allowed to question Mr. Coates. Meanwhile, we, the family, were allowed to write questions out, each on a separate form, and submit them to the hearing officer during the examination, who would ask those questions he deemed appropriate. But it was almost impossible for us, in this highly emotional situation, to formulate queries while also listening to the testimony.

Any attorney present on behalf of the victim's family would not have been allowed to examine the witnesses either, but would also be required to write out each question on a form and submit it to the hearing officer. None of us was allowed to speak.

Mr. Ordowski, the hearing master, was a sympathetic and kindly man, and obviously intelligent and experienced. In giving his instructions to the jury, however, he strongly emphasized those instructions regarding what constitutes justifiable homicide; his last admonition to the jurors seemed clearly designed to ensure a ruling of justifiable homicide.

Combined with the biased presentation of the alleged facts, it was my conclusion that the jurors had no choice but to rule the homicide justifiable.

The testimony that was given showed the death of my son was the result of negligence. However, there is no option of "negligent homicide." I could discuss at length why I believe this was a negligent homicide; however, that is for a different letter. My purpose here is to express my outrage at the obvious bias of the coroner's inquest process, and perhaps help effect a change whereby the hearing allows for examination of the witnesses by attorneys or representatives of the victim of the homicide, instead of just those concerned with protecting the government and its employees.

patricia m. jackson

Inquest system is deeply flawed Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) April 1, 2007 Sunday

las vegas

LOAD-DATE: April 3, 2007



74 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

January 11, 2007 Thursday

SECTION: B; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 822 words

HEADLINE: Hearing focuses on coroner's inquests

BYLINE: David Kihara

BODY:

REVIEW-JOURNAL

For Anthony Morris, changes to the Clark County coroner's inquest process are a matter of life or death.

Morris' son, Amir Crump, was fatally shot by police Feb. 1 after the 21-year-old aspiring rapper ambushed officers and gunned down Sgt. Henry Prendes.

The Las Vegas officers involved in the shooting were cleared of any wrongdoing by a coroner's inquest jury.

"My child is dead, and I'm going to tell you there is nothing on the planet that hurts more than having your child die before you do," said Morris, 49. "Can we look all over the country, or maybe even all over the world, to see if there is a better way to do this (inquests)?"

Morris, along with dozens of citizens and officials, debated changes to the coroner's inquest process Wednesday at the Clark County Commission chambers. At issue are the recommendations a panel will bring to the commissioners.

Panel and audience members showed they were deeply divided on what the changes should be. The panel is made up of officials from the county, attorney general's office, district attorney's office, local law enforcement agencies, the police union, and local offices of the ACLU and NAACP.

Panel members disagreed on whether representatives of family members of those killed by police can question officers in open court in front of a jury during an inquest.

The police union is staunchly opposed to having officers questioned in open court. Union representatives said that no other city or county in the country has an open and voluntary inquest process like Clark County does. The union also doesn't want officers to be subjected to questions that may violate their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination or leave them open to civil lawsuits.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada and the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, however, insist that questioning of officers by an attorney representing the family of the deceased is vital to ensure that inquests get to the truth.

Inquests are fact-finding hearings held in court after someone is killed at the hands of police officers. Critics have called the inquests one-sided in favor of the police.

Hearing focuses on coroner's inquests Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) January 11, 2007 Thursday

But one man who said he doesn't believe inquests favor officers is Arthur Diebold, 51. Diebold's son, Justin, a Las Vegas police officer, went before a coroner's inquest jury at the end of September. Justin Diebold was one of five officers who killed Shawn Collins, 43, outside a Circle K at Sahara Avenue and Nellis Boulevard.

A coroner's inquest ruled the shooting justified.

Arthur Diebold said it would be a "one-sided" search for the truth if lawyers were allowed to probe an officer's background and training.

"Do I, as the father of the officer, get to put the victim on trial?" he asked. "Do I get to call the victim's family? Do I get a representative in that courtroom so that I can probe the background (of a person killed by police)?"

There were some ideas that all panel members agreed on, such as replacing the lawyers who oversee the proceedings with justices of the peace, who better know court protocol.

They also agreed that instead of having representatives of the Clark County district attorney's office question witnesses, those duties should be handled by lawyers with the attorney general's office. Because the district attorney's office works so closely with police to prosecute criminals, panel members agreed that having the attorney general's office ask questions posed less of a conflict.

But the parties didn't agree on how officers should be questioned. Gary Peck, executive director of the ACLU of Nevada, said that he and the NAACP would be willing to make a concession - they would agree to the removal of the jury under some conditions if a representative of a deceased family member who is asking questions is not an attorney.

For example, jurors would be removed during questioning to prevent the possibility that inflammatory queries would be posed in their presence. If the justice of the peace determined the questions were appropriate, the jury would be brought back in to hear the testimony.

The ACLU has said that it won't support the panel recommendations if all three changes aren't brought to the commission.

The Police Protective Association, however, said it too wouldn't budge.

"The PPA will not be held hostage to the ACLU's call for all or nothing," said Chris Collins, executive director of the police union.

He said that if the commission were to allow officers to be questioned by representatives of family members in open court in front of a jury, officers might not attend the coroner's inquests after an in-custody death in the future.

But Collins said he also hoped some consensus would be reached through the public hearing process.

"Someone in this audience may hold the answer to this," he said.

Another public hearing will be held today at the County Commission chambers, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway.

LOAD-DATE: January 12, 2007



75 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

January 10, 2007 Wednesday

SECTION: B; Pg. 5B

LENGTH: 422 words

HEADLINE: in brief

BODY:

Clark County Coroner

Hearing on inquest process slated today

The public can weigh in on proposed changes to the Clark County Coroner's Inquest process today from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The hearing will be held in County Commission chambers at the Clark County Government Center, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, and will be broadcast live on Clark County Television, cable Channel 4.

A second day of hearings is scheduled for Thursday from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in commission chambers.

The coroner's inquests takes place after a person dies at the hands of police. A panel responsible for making reforms to the inquests have come up with three changes:

Replacing hearing masters, who oversee the proceedings, with justices of the peace.

Replacing representatives of the district attorney's office, who ask most of the questions, with lawyers from the state attorney general's office.

Allowing relatives of shooting victims to ask questions in open court. Those questions would be considered by the hearing master, who would determine whether they are relevant. Family members can currently submit questions in writing.

santa ana, Calif.

Rescued sailor arrives home after long trip

A beaming Ken Barnes stepped off an airplane Tuesday and into the arms of joyful family members and friends who kept vigil for days as the sailor awaited rescue on his disabled boat 500 miles off the tip of South America.

Barnes, 47, arrived at John Wayne Airport in Orange County shortly after 9 a.m. on a flight from Dallas after beginning the long trip home from Chile on Monday. He was rescued late last week by a Chilean fishing trawler after a violent storm prevented him from becoming the first solo American sailor to circumnavigate the world nonstop starting from the West Coast.

san francisco

Woman, 24, could get life prison sentence

A jury on Tuesday acquitted a 24-year-old woman of first-degree murder charges in the 2005 drowning deaths of her three children, but convicted her of lesser assault charges that still carry a maximum penalty of life in prison.

in brief Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) January 10, 2007 Wednesday

Jurors also continued deliberating the possibility of convicting LaShuan Harris of second-degree murder or manslaughter, but recessed for the day without making a decision on those charges.

Harris pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity to all counts related to the deaths of 6-year-old Trayshawn Harris, 2-year-old Taronta Greely Jr. and 16-month-old Joshua Greely. She threw the boys into the chilly waters of San Francisco Bay on Oct. 19, 2005. Prosecutors have said they won't seek the death penalty.

LOAD-DATE: January 11, 2007



77 of 79 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2007 DR Partners d/b/a Las Vegas Review-Journal
All Rights Reserved
Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada)

January 4, 2007 Thursday

SECTION: B; Pg. 3B

LENGTH: 467 words

HEADLINE: Inquest reform questioned

BYLINE: David Kihara

BODY:

REVIEW-JOURNAL

The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada is accusing Clark County officials of spreading "inaccurate and misleading" information about efforts to reform the Clark County coroner's inquest process.

In a letter to County Manager Virginia Valentine, the ACLU stated that the panel given the task of recommending changes hasn't agreed on the reforms despite county assertions that they have.

"Given the way the county has misrepresented the positions of various parties and the way the negotiations process unfolded, we have little confidence in its ability to facilitate the reforms needed to properly fix a badly broken inquest system," said Gary Peck, executive director of the ACLU of Nevada.

The Las Vegas Police Protective Association opposes the ACLU and other panel members' demand that inquests allow family members of people who die at the hands of police to ask questions in open court in front of a jury through a representative. Currently, family members submit questions in writing and a hearing master decides whether or not to ask them.

The county sent out a statement Dec. 27 stating the panel "developed consensus" on recommendations to present to the public at hearings on Jan. 10 and 11. The proposed changes are:

Replacing hearing masters, attorneys who oversee the hearings, with justices of the peace.

Switching out prosecutors with the Clark County District Attorneys office, who ask questions of witnesses at the inquests, with lawyers from the Nevada attorney general's office.

Allowing relatives of shooting victims to ask questions in open court.

The panel will present their proposed changes to the Clark County Commission, which will decide whether to adopt them.

Peck said the ACLU won't support the reforms unless family members can ask questions in front of a jury through a designated representative.

Coroner's inquests are held when someone is killed by police. Critics have said they are one-sided and favor the police.

Inquest reform questioned Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) January 4, 2007 Thursday

Assistant County Manager Elizabeth Quillin wrote a letter published in Wednesday's Review-Journal that said all members of the panel agreed to the three changes and "the only organization with concerns about one of the three proposals is the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union."

Peck said other members of the panel, such as the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also wanted family members to be able to ask questions in front of juries.

Reached Wednesday, Dean Ishman, president of the local branch of the NAACP, agreed that Quillin's statement was wrong. "It's incorrect because we always had concerns," he said. "The ideal circumstance is to ask questions in open court in front of a jury."

Quillin, however, maintained that there was consensus except for the lone sticking point.

LOAD-DATE: January 5, 2007

108HK2

***** Print Completed *****

Time of Request: Friday, October 01, 2010 18:40:38 EST

Print Number: 2841:245006239

Number of Lines: 482

Number of Pages:

Send To: GROSS, JENNIFER
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA-LAS VEGAS
4505 S MARYLAND PKWY BOX 451003
LAS VEGAS, NV 89154-1003